

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 6401

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: GSCE, PFOR, GE

SUBJECT: HONECKER ON CSCE AND SECURITY

SUMMARY

SED FIRST SECRETARY HONECKER TOOK THE OCCASION OF VISITS TO
UNITS OF THE PEOPLES ARMY ON SEPTEMBER 11 TO STATE THE
ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GDR TOWARDS THE RECENTLY
CONCLUDED FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI. HIS SPEECH WAS STRIDENTLY
IDEOLOGICAL IN TONE AND BETRYED A STONG SUSPICION OF THE
MOTIVES OF THE "IMPERIALIST" COUNTRIES INCLUDING THE US
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AND ITS NATO ALLIES. HONECKER SINGLED OUT PRESIDENT FORD FOR

CRITICISM OVER CURRENT AND PROJECTED SIZE OF THE US DEFENSE BUDGET. HE ALSO CALLED DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S STATEMENT ABOUT A NUCLEAR FIRST STRIKE "ADVENTUROUS". HONECKER'S MAIN THEME WAS THAT IMPERIALISM HAS NOT CHANGED ITS SPOTS AND, BECAUSE OF THIS FACT, THE GDR AND OTHER SOCIALIST STATES MUST MAINTAIN AND INCREASE THEIR MILITARY VIGILANCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE SECURITY OF THE STATE AND THE INVIOABILITY OF THEIR BORDERS. WHAT IS NEEDED NOW HE SAID, IS A BROADENING OF POLITICAL DETENTE TO INCLUDE MILITARY, ESPECIALLY NUCLEAR, DISARMEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. HONECKER'S SPEECH ENTITLED "THE INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY OF SOCIALIST ARMED FORCES," WAS GIVEN AT A MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF A VOLKSARMEE AIR FIGHTER WING IN ROSTOCK AFTER HIS PREVIOUS VISIT ON THE SAME DAY TO AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT ROCKET UNIT AT FRANKFURT/ODER. IN BOTH PLACES, HONECKER STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE MILITARY FORCES, INCLUDING BORDER GUARDS, TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE. HE STATED THAT THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE INCREASING ECONOMIC POWER OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, THEIR INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY, AND THE POWERFUL DEFENSE CAPABILITY OF THE WARSAW FACT FORCES. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE SECURITY WHICH THIS REPRESENTS AGAINST NATO WILL NOT BE BARTERED AWAY AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.

3. ON CSCE, HONECKER SAID THAT THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI REPRESENTS A VICTORY FOR SOCIALIST FORCES WHICH HAVE WANTED SUCH A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR YEARS. ACCORDING TO HIM, HELSINKI SIGNIFIED THE IMPERIALIST STATES' ACCEPTANCE OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO LENIN'S DOCTRINE OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE. THE SED FIRST SECRETARY CHARACTERIZED THE NEGOTIATIONS AS LONG AND DIFFICULT, AND HE FORESHADOWED AN EVEN LONGER AND MORE DIFFICULT PERIOD OF NEGOTIATIONS AHEAD IN ORDER TO BROADEN POLITICAL DETENTE INTO MILITARY DISARMAMENT. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT THE CONTROL AND REDUCTION OF THE NUMBERS OF NUCLEAR

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WEAPONS. IN THIS CONNECTION, HONECKER NOTED THE PREPARATIONS IN NATO FOR EVERY CONCEIVABLE KIND OF WAR, FROM CONVENTIONAL TO NUCLEAR, AND THE "ADVENTUROUS CONCEPT" OF U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER FOR "LIMITED STRATEGIC ATOMIC WAR". HE CRITICIZED PRESIDENT FORD FOR SUPPORTING AN AMERICAN DEFENSE BUDGET IN 1975/76 OF 93 BILLION DOLLARS WHICH HONECKER SAID WAS GREATER THAN THE U.S. DEFENSE BUDGETS AT THE TIME OF

VIETNAM, AND REPORTEDLY FOR SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES MUST BECOME "MILITARY POWER NUMBER ONE". HONECKER CONCLUDED WITH THE STATEMENT THAT "WE HAVE EVERY REASON THEREFORE TO BE WATCHFUL AND TO HOLD OUR WEAPONS FIRMLY IN OUR HANDS."

4. WITH REGARD TO BASKET III ITEMS, HONECKER MADE THE STRONGEST STATEMENT TO APPEAR IN GDR COMMENTARIES SINCE HELSINKI TO EXPRESS HIS RESERVATIONS ON HUMANITARIAN CONTACTS: "THUS IT IS SELF EVIDENT THAT WE WILL ALLOW NEITHER OPEN NOR CONCEALED ATTEMPTS, UNDER THE BANNER OF 'FREEDOM OF INFORMATION' OR 'HUMAN CONTACTS' , TO PERPETRATE ESPIONAGE, SABOTAGE AND IDEOLOGICAL DIVERSION AGAINST THE GDR OR TO VIOLATE OUR SOCIALIST LEGALITY." HE STATED THAT SECURITY IS THE FOUNDATION FOR COOPERATION AND THE TOUCHSTONE OF WHETHER PROGRESS IS MADE TOWARD THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PEACE.

5. COMMENT: HONECKER'S SPEECH IS NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS STRIDENT MILITARISM AND THOUGH TALK ABOUT BASKET III, ITS TIMING SO SOON AFTER THE FINAL ACT OF CSCE, AND THE SELECTION OF ARMY UNITS AS ITS INITIAL AUDIENCE.

6. IT SEEMS TO US HONECKER INTENDED THESE REMARKS PRIMARILY FOR HOME CONSUMPTION. HE MAY, FOR EXAMPLE HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO DAMPEN BASKET III EXPECTATIONS. (THE FULL TEXT OF THE FINAL ACT OF CSCE WAS CARRIED IN "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" AND DISCUSSED IN STUDY GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE GDR.) HE MAY ALSO HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY, AFTER WIDELY-PUBLICIZED CONTACTS WITH WESTERN LEADERS AT HELSINKI INCLUDING PRESIDENT FORD, TO REMAIN THE MILITARY AND CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS OF THIS PARTY THAT HE IS NO SOFTIE.

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7. PERHAPS HE IS ALSO ANTICIPATING A TURN TO THE RIGHT IN SOVIET POLICIES AFTER THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS-- HIS PREDECESSOR ULBRICHT WAS ADROIT AT FORESEEING SUCH SHIFTS-- AND WITH THIS IN MIND IS REAFFIRMING FOR SIMILARY ELEMENTS IN MOSCOW HIS CREDENTIALS AS A HARD-LINER.

8. THIS SPEECH HAS ANGERED MANY WESTERN DIPLOMATS IN BERLIN, WHO ARGUE THAT WHILE IT IS NOT SURPRISING TO HEAR SUCH THINGS IT IS DISAPPOINTING TO HEAR THEM SO SOON. THESE OBSERVERS BELIEVE HONECKER'S SPEECH HAS PUT TO REST HOPE FOR EVEN MINOR SHIFTS IN GDR PRACTICES AS A RESULT OF CSCE. OTHERS ARGUE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH SHIFTS COULD ONLY COME ACCEPTABLY IN THE WAKE OF A PUBLIC HARD-LINE STATEMENT REASSURING TO CONSERVATIVES.

9. WE DO NOT BELIEVE HONECKER'S SPEECH WAS A MOSCOW
PRODUCT, BUT RATHER THAT IT WAS INDIGENOUSLY EAST GERMAN:
A RESPONSE, WITHIN THE TOLERANCES OF SOVIET POLICY, TO THE
RISKS OF THE CSCE FINAL ACT FOR THIS EXPOSED COUNTRY,
AND NEEDED REASSURANCE TO MILITARY AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY
CIRCLES THAT HONECKER HAS NOT LOST SIGHT OF GDR SECURITY
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DETENTE. COOPER

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